

The Nation and The Athenæum

CHRISTMAS BOOK SUPPLEMENT

GIFT-BOOKS

"GIFT-BOOK" is an opprobrious epithet. It suggests at once the "book which is no-book," abhorred by Charles Lamb. One expects from it, as from a charity blanket, neither warmth nor comfort. A fair exterior is, indeed, conjured up by the name, but no bookman would contemplate reading a gift-book, any more than an experienced housewife would make up the fire with presentation fire-irons. It would display ignorance, if not positive ill-manners, to look a gift-book in the mouth. In short, a gift-book is a book which one would gladly give away.

It would be possible, no doubt, to make some defence of gift-books along the lines that a well-bound volume is an ornamental thing, an essential feature in a well-furnished room, and that since most people do not read books, the only quality necessary in a gift-book is a good personal appearance. This line of defence is not required, however, by the collection of books with which I am now concerned. My clients, if I may call them so, boldly plead "Not Guilty." For the most part they are not gift-books at all, but only books which any sensible person would be glad to receive, which, I submit, is a very different thing.

They are, I must concede, an extraordinarily diverse lot, but that, after all, is a merit. "You pays your money, and you takes your choice"; and the wider the choice the better both for the giver and the receiver (supposing, of course, that their tastes agree, or that the former is a discerning person). The quality of diversity being thus twice blest, let me boldly spread out my mixed bag before the public gaze. Here are this season's gift-books (so-called), with their names and addresses in full, and a brief hint of the contents of each. I take them at random, as they come to hand.

"The Enchanted Wood," by Sir Francis Newbolt (not Sir Henry of that ilk, but the lawyer who also does etchings), with forty-eight reproductions of dry-points and etchings by the author (Philip Allan, 7s. 6d.). A little book of etchings, prose, and verse; charming in its way, but it is a pity that the etchings are so much reduced in reproduction.

"The Kasidah," by Sir Richard Burton, illustrated by John Kettelwell (Philip Allan, 6s.). A more or less original poem by Burton from which one may learn what the "Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam" would have been like if FitzGerald had not been a poet. The pictures are in keeping with the text.

"Border Ballads," selected and decorated with woodcuts by Douglas Percy Bliss. Foreword by Herbert J. C. Grierson (Milford, 12s. 6d.). The ballads are well chosen and the woodcuts have an appropriate simplicity.

"The Chapbook" (a yearly Miscellany), No. 40, edited by Harold Monro (Cape, 5s.). This volume opens with an essay on "Obscurity," by Leonard Woolf, and the other contributions appear to be examples of obscurity, both literary and artistic, by the modern school.

"Biography for Beginners," by E. C. Bentley, with forty diagrams by G. K. Chesterton (Werner Laurie, 6s.). A new edition of this famous work, with some additional prefatory verses.

"When first it dawned upon mankind,
Biography for Beginners was signed
(For reasons with which I will not weary you)
With the name of E. Clerihew.

* * *

"But (for reasons which would only bore you)
The name on the edition before you
Has been changed—I hope not detrimentally
—To Edmund Clerihew Bentley."

"Colonels," by H. M. Bateman, with an introduction by Harry Graham (Methuen, 10s. 6d.). More than sixty of Mr. Bateman's characteristic drawings.

"Letters to Katie," by Sir Edward Burne-Jones (Macmillan, 10s. 6d.). Playful illustrated letters to a little granddaughter, which will delight any not-too-modern child.

"The Duenna," a comic opera in three acts by Richard Brinsley Sheridan, with an introduction by Nigel Playfair, and illustrations by George Sheringham (Constable, 21s.).

"The Story of the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith," by Nigel Playfair, with an introduction by Arnold Bennett, an epilogue by A. A. Milne, and illustrations after Lovat Fraser, Sheringham, Zinkeisen, Kapp (Chatto & Windus, 16s.).

These two books will be joyfully received by anyone who has enjoyed himself at Hammersmith.

"Observations," by Max Beerbohm (Heinemann, 25s.). The famous cartoons exhibited at the Leicester Galleries last April, admirably reproduced.

"The Sunday at Home," 1924-25 (Religious Tract Society, 12s. 6d.). There is a reverent tone about this book, which is conspicuously absent, I regret to say, from the last mentioned. But I said it was a mixed bag.

"Old Q. and Barrymore" (Volume V. of The Lives of the Rakes), by E. Beresford Chancellor (Philip Allan, 10s. 6d.). More entertaining perhaps, but not so edifying as the "Sunday at Home."

"The Picture of Dorian Gray," by Oscar Wilde, with an introduction by Osbert Burdett and illustrations by Henry Keen (Lane, 16s.). This story contains some of Wilde's best epigrams. Mr. Keen's illustrations are both clever and attractive. I should like the volume for a Christmas present.

"Hullo! Is that How you Ride?" by "Yoi-Over" (Witherby, 10s.). A discourse on the pleasures and problems of riding by a huntsman and whipper-in of forty years' standing, cleverly illustrated by himself.

"Everyman and other Plays," decorated by John Austen (Chapman & Hall, 15s.). A beautiful production, illustrated in the illuminated manuscript style.

"Where the Blue Begins," by Christopher Morley, with illustrations by Arthur Rackham (Heinemann, 15s.). This is a mysterious production of a mildly satirical character. Mr. Rackham's pictures of dogs dressed as humans are clever but rather melancholy.

"English Porcelain Figures of the Eighteenth Century," by William King (Medici Society, 17s. 6d.). The illustrations in this book are most admirable. It contains eight full-page plates in colour and seventy-two black-and-white pictures of porcelain figures, mainly in private collections. (Give it to Aunt Jane.)

"The Physiology of Taste, or Meditations on Transcendental Gastronomy," by Brillat-Savarin, with an introduction by Arthur Machen and designs by Andrew Johnson (Peter Davies, £2 2s.). A centenary translation of the gourmand's classic; well translated, well printed, well produced. (Just the book for Uncle John.)

"The King's Breakfast." Words by A. A. Milne. Music by H. Fraser-Simson. Decorations by E. H. Shepard. (Methuen, 3s. 6d.). The most popular of Mr. Milne's poems, in a new form, with a special introduction and another song, "Feed-my-Cow." Delightful.

"Penguin Island," by Anatole France, translated by A. W. Evans, with illustrations by Frank C. Papé (Lane, 16s.). A handsome edition of France's masterpiece. Mr. Papé's pictures are somewhat repellent, but they suit the text.

"Figures of Earth: a Comedy of Appearances," by James Branch Cabell, with illustrations by Frank C. Papé (Lane, 21s.). This book (uniform in appearance with the above edition of "Penguin Island") appears to be an elaborate American literary joke. It purports to be the history of a mythical hero, Manuel, and it is written in a vein of gentle satire.

A word may be said about Christmas cards and calendars, which are gifts, if not gift-books. The Medici Society produces some very elegant varieties of both, ranging from Reynolds reproductions downwards. The British Museum, too, has some wonderful coloured reproductions from Missals, &c.

P. I.

LOVE AND THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

The Fairy Doll. By JEAN-GALLI DE BIBIENA. Translated by H. B. V. (Chapman & Hall. 21s.)

The Opportunities of a Night. By M. DE CRÉBILLON LE FILS. Translated by ERIC SUTTON. (Chapman & Hall. 21s.)

"If I can get a mandrake root with child
The sexual problem may be somehow settled."

"WHAT thing is love?" The matter has been argued in print ever since a famous Athenian supper party; but as men are always re-creating it, as they do art and truth, we shall be wise to take a hint from Pilate, and not expect an answer. "It is a prickle, it is a sting, It is a pretty, pretty thing": it is the romance of life, or it is a bore: a primrose dalliance, or a tiresome manifestation of the Life Force: it is "D'alma costume, e di cor volontate," or "le contact de deux épidermes." It is an unfailing subject for conversation.

And again, what is the eighteenth century? Is it to be found in the letters of Chesterfield or in those of Junius and the Drapier? Is it the century of Horace Walpole, or of Swedenborg, Wesley, Washington, and Bach? At least, we know that at the beginning, in England, it was a century that honoured and exalted letters, and excelled in refinement of taste. Yet it starved Farquhar to death, insulted Wren, harried Vanbrugh, laughed at Berkeley, allowed Steele to die in penury in Wales, and Swift to languish in Dublin. Did it not drag Prior from a pot-house?—to become the scapegoat for the Treaty of Utrecht. Was not Addison its glory? He was an industrious clerk, and had the virtue of never opening his mouth in the House. At least, it was the century of the Adams . . . and of the Gothic revival. Of Marivaux . . . and of Voltaire. So one can go on, for "all the ages are equal," as Blake observed. Thus let us follow Mr. Lytton Strachey's example, dip our bucket, take our choice, and allow the eighteenth century to be a good subject to bicker about.

Mr. Shane Leslie in his introduction to Bibiena's story ("La Poupée") gives us a clue to his eighteenth century by referring to "Mr. Alexander Pope." Mr. Aldous Huxley, introducing Crébillon ("La Nuit et le Moment"), treats us—the word is deliberately chosen—to an admirably lucid, well-balanced, refreshing essay on it, a welcome antidote to the fashionable idea of the eighteenth century, which, after all, had "gin shops to the right and to the left," where you could get "drunk for a penny, and very drunk for twopence," and concludes that in any case "the greatest men of the eighteenth century are not in the least what one would call dix-huitième."

At all events, there was for a short time in eighteenth-century France a small section of society that had the leisure and the wit to do nothing gracefully, to filch Wilde's phrase with Mr. Huxley. If the seventeenth century made love a sport, the eighteenth tried to make it an art, or at least part of the texture of social life, for, whatever love might be, love-making was a rational social pleasure. Lovelace lights his torch, a gilded Cupidon peeps out, and the rest is—easily supplied by the imagination. Then there is something to talk about. Bibiena's story is a very pleasant satire on the amorous abbé of the period, and his moral may be summed up in "Be free from affection!" and "Be delicate!" Borrowing, as Pope had done and Anatole France was to do, from the Comte de Gabalis, his charm lies in the slightly sentimental tale—if to be sentimental is still to retain some illusion as to one's physical sensations—of the sylphid who so enchantingly reformed the erring abbé. Bibiena liked love and his lady to be decorously decorative, but he loathed the fop.

Crébillon the younger, according to Mr. Huxley, was scientific; but this is true only in so far as he was the accurate and cold observer. He never got to the stage of trying to relate one set of phenomena to another, as Diderot did in his witty "Rêve de D'Alembert"; certainly he is not within hailing distance of Stendhal's brilliant analysis, or of M. Julien Benda's equally intimate "Dialogue d'Eleuthère." Mr. Huxley suggests that the sub-title of the book might be "What Every Young Don Juan Ought to

Know," but to be like Crébillon's Clitandre he must have, besides personal charm, very considerable muscle, for this, it appears, was responsible for as many of the hero's conquests as was his skill in love's dialectic. Crébillon liked things clear-cut, and he hated the false prude.

Bibiéna's book is a fantastic narrative, Crébillon's a dialogue, which took place, moreover, under the most gratifying and discreet conditions. They both have the great merit of being short, which is not a veiled adverse criticism, but means that the authors knew to a hair the length their treatment of the subject could carry: there is, therefore, none of the tedium that is apt to overtake one half-way through "Liaisons Dangereuses," in spite of the far better mind working in it. The manner of each is delightful, though Bibiena's story within the story is disproportionately long, and severe critics might think Crébillon's work too dramatic for the dialogue form; and, indeed, one could wish most of the action away. Both are admirably translated into a dulcet but not boneless English: Mr. Sutton's has the better wrist work. In each we are sometimes aware that we are reading something done from the French: not that the idiom is ever Gallic, but that it evidently has not flowed spontaneously from an English pen. However, in works so intentionally artificial, that is, if anything, an advantage.

BONAMY DOBRÉE.

MELBA

Memories and Melodies. By NELLIE MELBA. (Thornton Butterworth 21s.)

It would not be difficult to make Melba's life into a fairy-story—how there was a poor goose-girl who took a kitchen shovel in her hands and struck open a gold mine in the cabbage patch, and great kings paid her homage, and she lived in silks and finery happily ever afterwards. It is true that the facts are slightly less romantic—Melba's father was the son of a Scotch farmer, and came to Melbourne with a pound in his pocket and made a fortune. But it is also true that his daughter was so short of funds when she took lessons from Marchesi in Paris that she had only one dress, which she wore week in, week out, in spite of Marchesi's protests. Then suddenly the mine was discovered—the bottomless gold mine in Melba's throat. In an incredibly short time she was appearing in Brussels, singing to an incredulous, silent, finally uproarious house, and waking next day to find herself, soberly and solidly, famous throughout Europe. Indeed, every door was open to a woman with that voice; every city in the world clamoured to hear it. But the golden voice was lodged, as such voices often are, in a shrewd, businesslike body. She did not penetrate to strange places, nor sing strange songs. "Home, Sweet Home" rang out almost incessantly in the palaces of kings and millionaires. But once at least the prosperous pilgrimage was interrupted, and she stooped over Sarah Bernhardt on her deathbed. The great actress whispered, "Ah, Melba . . . my golden voice needs me no longer, for I am dying!" and when Melba got out into the street her friend stared at her. Her face was daubed with the dying Bernhardt's rouge. Melba's own make-up was always extremely efficient. She brought her father's business temperament on to the stage. No sacrifice of time or food was too great in the cause of her work, and she prided herself upon singing exactly what the composer wrote. Only once, apparently, did she fail, when she sang Brunhilde in "Siegfried." "The music was too much for me. . . . I had a sensation almost of suffocation, of battling with some immense monster"—and she never sang Wagner again. But the crown was not without its thorns. She has been accused of having no roof to her mouth, of eating three raw eggs before each act of "La Bohème," and finally half London believed that Melba had to give up singing because of her passion for eating mice. The real culprit was a magpie; for birds and beasts, scents and ices have all been named after her; but even so, there are compensations.

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Adventures of a Scholar-Tramp. By GLEN MULLEN. (Cape. 7s. 6d.)

Seventy Summers. By POULTNEY BIGELOW. 2 vols. (Arnold. 32s.)

Reminiscences of a Student's Life. By JANE ELLEN HARRISON. (Hogarth Press. 5s.)

Stories of an Expert. By Dr. G. C. WILLIAMSON. (Jenkins. 25s.)

SHOWMEN, statesmen, politicians, publicists, and syndicated newspaper proprietors prove sufficiently that, however changed we may be individually, in the mass we still set up a synthetic mental atmosphere of appalling simplicity, in which alone capacious minds of a certain kind can exist. In his vastly informed compilation of episodes, amusing anecdotes, roundabouts, financial reverberations, and stenographic gossip, Mr. Cochran has given us not so much the marvellous secrets of true showmanship as an unconscious essay in crowd-psychology. A crowd gathers, an incalculable concatenation; a communal curiosity, surprise, or terror is compounded; the crowd disperses, and we are back in our twentieth-century selves. Having caught his crowd, the showman, beloved of Pan, dilates in a vast general air obnoxious to the ordinary individual. His primitive mental world is superlative; concealed behind canvas, until your money is down, are the most ferocious lion in captivity, the largest elephant, the daintiest equestrienne. Mr. Cochran has staged the champion wrestler of the world; produced the "Miracle," that stupendous spectacle with its hundreds of performers; promoted a gigantic prize-fight, exulted obviously in a world of magnification, and drawn Olympian breath. He has had a care for art, as Mr. Agate tells us in a characteristic foreword, but he still pursues, in temporary dreams of embarrassment, Behemoth.

After the drums, glare, and tantalizing excitement of the world of compound mind, one is sufficiently invigorated and recklessly minded to swing, with Mr. Mullen, to the flying stirrup and be whirled, in darkness, across the American continent. We have expelled the tramp with increasing civilization, and our timid chickens may pick their grain in peace: but those who neither toil nor spin and can find a pillow under any hedge provide a fine spiritual contradiction of all we accept. The American brotherhood of the road has, fittingly enough, adapted itself to the rail, taking our modern idea of speed at its own worth. Mr. Mullen, of course, was only playing at hobo, but it is a formative and healthy experience, no doubt, to ride freely (whatever economic moralists may say), outside, rather than inside, a railway car: and pleasant enough to think a scholar can still wander as in the Middle Ages. The idiom of the hobo is radical, hardy, and if it has not the dew upon it, has virile axle-grease. Of course, from Jack London and Mr. Davies, who writes a foreword, we have learned all the rails.

In his memoirs Mr. Poultny Bigelow, the well-known American publicist, brings us back to the serious world of politics. As his title indicates, the arena of public argument in which he has so often fought, has to his mind been sunlit: though his outspoken views on the negro and on missionaries in the Far East, and his exposure of Panama scandals, have not brought him popularity. He represents well the fine Anglo-Saxon stock, and having suffered for his honesty, is a good hater, disliking German Jews, perfervid Hibernians of Tammany Hall, all official subterfuge, and political expediency. His rather ferocious attack on the Wilsonian administration is too personal to please an English mind, even if one agreed with his views. Like many sturdy democrats, he is impressed by aristocratic blood, and dislikes majority rule. As a boy in Germany, he played with the young Kaiser, and takes characteristic pleasure in defeating popular expectation, by recording a total absence of incipient megalomania or satanism in the heir to the throne. How the German Navy sprang from a royal English present of a toy shop is a pleasant and fantastic story.

Miss Harrison draws much too sparingly upon a rich and wise memory. These sketches of Yorkshire days, of meetings at Cambridge, and travels in Greece, with their peculiarly individual quality, will be remembered by readers

of THE NATION. The shrewd yet kindly glimpses of Tennyson ("stopping in his recital of 'Maud' to ask angrily, 'Do you think Browning could have written that line? Do you think Swinburne could?' I could truthfully answer, 'Impossible'"), of Herbert Spencer, Walter Raleigh playing with his nice new title, mellow thoughts, tinged with autumn, and learning become delight, make us call upon Miss Harrison for more. One likes the little picture of Andrew Lang in a blustering mood:—

"Our hostess brought him up to me, and, with a misguided desire to be pleasant, said, 'You know Miss Harrison, and I am sure you have read her delightful books.' 'Don't know Miss Harrison,' muttered Andrew, 'never read her delightful books, don't want to,' &c. (Oh, Andrew, and you had reviewed those 'delightful books' not too delightedly!) 'Come, Mr. Lang,' I said, 'we're both hungry, and I promise not to say a single word to you. Be a man.' Alas! I broke my word. It was an enchanting dinner."

Dr. Williamson tells us of the romance, mystery, and crime that may be discovered while collecting precious objects of art, paintings, jewels, and miniatures. In the Reign of Terror, a soldier looting in the Palace of the Tuileries threw out two miniatures, which were picked up by children: Queen Victoria, looking at a doll's house in the nursery of an aristocratic family, recognized a miniature of Marie Antoinette, given as a toy to the children by a French governess. The chapters on forgery and its detection are of compelling interest.

BOYS' BOOKS

If, under Mr. Wells's influence, one is tempted to think of history books as being more important than others, the perusal of even one of them with the thought of its possible interest for some ordinarily intelligent boy in one's mind is enough to convince one that however history may help to confirm the naturally well-disposed in their goodness, it confirms the ill-disposed equally well in their badness—Alcibiades is as influential, to say the least, as Leonidas—and that it leaves most people, including many otherwise intelligent lads, profoundly unmoved. So though one discusses a history book first, it is not with any desire to persuade parents or godparents, aunts or uncles, to give history books rather than story books or books on science to their young relations irrespective of the latter's tastes and tendencies. It is rather, indeed, to emphasize the fact that the demand is so slight that in twenty-six books for boys, picked for review almost at random, only one is avowedly a history book.

"The Child's Story of the Human Race," by Ramon Coffman (Jonathan Cape, 12s. 6d.), comes from America. It is simply and sympathetically written from the point of view of a somewhat too rational American, it is not too scrappy, and shows some effort to avoid vulgarity both in the writing and the illustrations. The addition of a short bibliography of books of fact and fiction suitable for boys at the end of each chapter would add to its value. The printing is clear and pleasing, as always with Messrs. Cape's publications.

Historical fiction seems like religious fiction, always to be written with an eye to edification, patriotic edification of course instead of sectarian. This is true of "Quentin Durward" and "Westward Ho!" no less than of books by lesser writers than Scott and Kingsley. Scott's Louis XI, for instance, is a very different man from the Louis XI. referred to at the end of Balzac's book about Catherine de' Medici. It is not because one thinks Balzac's Louis the greater man—though, of course, one does—but because his motives are so differently interpreted, that one would like to suggest to Messrs. Scribner the book's inclusion in the same series as their excellent "Quentin Durward" (10s. 6d.), excellent, one must add, not for its illustrations, which are commonplace, but for its good print and pleasant binding. "Westward Ho!" (The Religious Tract Society, 6s.) does not wear as well as "Quentin Durward." To the adult it seems very biased. But its great wealth of incident and its variety of atmosphere and personality should keep it in favour with English boys for many generations more. This edition is in rather unnecessarily small print, but it is clear print nevertheless, and some of the smaller drawings amongst the illustrations are above average merit. "The

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White Hawk," which has for sub-title "Matched Against Alva," by Kent Carr (Chambers, 4s.), is a rather short story of the "Westward Ho!" period, with plenty of heroism and jokes of a conventional kind and therefore likely to please. "To Herat and Cabul" (Blackie, 3s. 6d.), on the other hand, is not only excellent Henty—and what more could a boy want than that?—it has, for all its melodrama, a truer suggestion of tragic consciousness on the part of the author than many more pretentious stories. Herbert Strang's "Barclay of the Guides" (Oxford University Press, 5s.) is a story of the India of the Mutiny period, romantic and sentimental, and likely to give some pleasure to lovers of "Kim."

Of the stories of adventure, "The Treasure of the Red Peak," by Frederick Brough (Sheldon Press, 2s. 6d.), is a good specimen, rather short, but covering a good deal of ground, ranging from the discovery of sixteenth-century documents in a crypt during a walking tour in Spain to adventures with Indians. "From Home to Strange Adventures," by A. Irving (Oxford University Press, 6s.), is a scrappy, but nevertheless interesting, story of three boys who ran away to Ireland, went out in a boat, and, getting caught in a storm and rescued, went to South America, where they had encounters with alligators and other things. "Clinton's Quest," by Percy F. Westerman (Pearson, 3s. 6d.), and "Coppernob Buckland," by Lawrence Bourne (Oxford University Press, 2s. 6d.), both begin in schools in England and take their heroes to far places, Clinton to West Africa, where he has adventures with natives and with Portuguese wrong 'uns, Coppernob to delightful adventures in, of all places, the eastern United States of America. Fenimore Cooper's "The Deerslayer" (Scribner, 10s. 6d.) does not call for comment at this time of day. It reads as well as ever it did, and the illustrations by N. C. Wyeth are of more than average merit. "On Autumn Trails," by Emma Lindsay Squier (T. Fisher Unwin, 5s.), is a series of little stories of wolves and porcupines and hawks in Nova Scotia told to the authoress by a friend called The Capt'n and pleasantly retold here. The frontispiece by Paul Bransom is quite noticeably good as a piece of drawing and composition, but his other illustrations are disappointing. "Sea Scouts of the Kestrel," by Percy F. Westerman (Seeley, Service & Co., 5s.), and "The Log of the Pioneers," by John Lewis (Oxford University Press, 2s.), will appeal to Scouts. Of three school stories, "Starchy Archie," by R. L. Bellamy (John Castle, 3s. 6d.), is a rather conventional story of a boy who was brought up by aunts, but whom school made a man of! "Fellow Fags," by E. Talbot (Sheldon Press, 2s.), is comical enough to please many. Such things as the fight between the master Ousten and the boy Bramwell will make innumerable boys delight in "The Idol of St. Moncreeth," by A. Harcourt Burrage (Nelson, 5s.). Jules Verne's "A Journey to the Centre of the Earth," in a version by Isabel C. Fortey (Blackie, 2s.), reads as splendidly as ever it did.

But it is no longer necessary for science to disguise itself as romance. Such a book as Archibald Williams's "Engineering Feats" (Nelson, 10s. 6d.) is as thrilling as any and more beautiful than most boys' stories. The picture on the wrapper is enough by itself to stir the laziest of youthful imaginations, and the subjects dealt with range from the "Lines" of Carnac to the commercial aeroplane. "The Mastery of the Air," by W. J. Claxton (Blackie, 3s. 6d.), is a history and analysis of the conquest of the air, and deals with spatial and atmospheric matters as well as mechanical. "Every Boy's Open-Air Book," by R. Thurston Hopkins (Cecil Palmer, 6s.), nicely printed, will commend itself, like "The Log of the Pioneers" and "Sea Scouts of the Kestrel," more especially to Scouts, but it can also be recommended to ordinary campers-out. "Scientific Amusements and Experiments" (Seeley, Service, 5s.) suggests interesting and amusing experiments utilizing heat, light, and sound, and is one of the best books for boys that Mr. C. R. Gibson has produced. "Wireless Construction," by J. L. Pritchard and E. W. Hobbs (Blackie, 6s.), is detailed and well illustrated.

For Annuals it is difficult to advise between Herbert Strang's (Oxford University Press, 5s.) and Blackie's (5s.). Both are cheap and have enough variety to keep any small boy pleasurably interested through the holidays. As for "The Boy's Own" (R.T.S., 12s. 6d.), it remains, in its way, without a rival.

BOOKS FOR GIRLS

THE school stories of 1925 are no doubt very pleasant reading for those whose years are still divided into terms and "hols." In those who were born a decade or two too early they may rouse some envy, for they convince us that the spirited diversions of school life to-day—the games, the less memorized and more interesting lessons, the dramatic societies, the Girl Guides and Camp Fire activities, the responsibilities of authority—all make up a very attractive whole. The standard of the school stories is high, and while here and there, of course, a fire, a chase by a bull, a theft or a faint helps to fill some three hundred pages, the plots as a whole are not sensational. It may be assumed that the Sixth have largely outgrown this type of fiction, for the forms that figure most prominently in the stories are the Fifth and the Fourth.

"An Unofficial Schoolgirl," by Christine Chaundler (Nisbet, 5s.), tells very naturally and sympathetically of the longings of a lonely girl for the companionship and other joys of school life. "Z House," by Dorothea Moore (Nisbet, 5s.), describes the raising of the standard of a house that has fallen on evil days by a girl who, without being a saint, faces a difficult job very pluckily. "Val Forrest in the Fifth," by Evelyn Smith (Blackie, 5s.), is a bright story of another girl who has to overcome difficulties. "Katharine Goes to School," by Winifred Darch (Oxford University Press, 6s.), runs on more conventional lines, but is decidedly readable, and so is "The Discovery of Kate," by E. L. Haverfield (Nelson, 5s.).

Angela Brazil tells us in the dedication to "My Own Schooldays" (Blackie, 6s.) that she has yielded to the entreaties of her many girl-readers to tell them of her own experiences. We are not sure that she was wise, for here is an instance where truth is not stranger than fiction—where indeed, to tell the truth, the truth is very dull. Angela Brazil shared the tastes and hobbies of the children contemporary with her, and in very skilful hands her schooldays, uneventful though they were, might have been entertainingly resuscitated. But the bulk of the reminiscences are told loosely and without point. "I suppose I must have been somewhat of a humourist in those days," says the writer, but there are few signs that the great gift has been retained. Miss Brazil crushingly informs us: "I have troubled little about reviewers," and we know that she is a popular writer for girls, so it may be that her admirers will again give us the lie. All the same, we should hesitate to present this book to the Fifth.

"Ven at Gregory's," by Elsie J. Oxenham (Chambers, 5s.), deals with some very kind and attractive schoolgirls, and "Dimsie Head Girl," by D. F. Bruce (Oxford University Press, 5s.), will be welcomed by those who have enjoyed the other "Dimsie" books. Kenya Colony is the setting of "The School in the Wilds," by May Baldwin (Chambers, 3s. 6d.).

The shadow of the Girl Guide falls across many of the Christmas books, but there are two readable stories in which she holds the stage—"Bunty of the Blackbirds," by Christine Chaundler (Nisbet, 3s. 6d.), and "Gillian of the Guides," by Winifred Darch (Oxford University Press, 3s. 6d.)—while "Peggy's School Pack," by H. B. Davidson (Sheldon Press, 2s.), is a spirited little story about Brownies.

It is possible to imagine a girl to whom school and Guide stories appear in the light of a 'bus-driver's holiday. She may want to go further afield. If she likes something stirring she is recommended to read "Her Own Kin," by Bessie Marchant (Blackie, 5s.), which takes her to a feast of adventure in Canada. "Jill the Hostage," by May Wynne (Pearson, 3s. 6d.), is another "thriller," but Jill's encounters with Red Indians savour too much of the sensationalism of the "movies." An entertaining book is "The Perfect Miss Coverdale," by E. M. Channon (Nisbet, 3s. 6d.), and "The Adventure Club," by Rose Fyleman (Methuen, 3s. 6d.), deals pleasantly with the rather mild adventures of some young children.

We can imagine how the Fifth would condemn and deride the sugary sentimentality of "The Girls of Banshee Castle," by Rosa Mulholland (Blackie, 4s.), and we doubt whether their lofty code of honour would quite approve of the publishers' action in clothing in an alluring jacket showing two modern short-frocked girls, one of them

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Amongst the annuals, "The Girl's Own" (Religious Tract Society, 12s. 6d.) and "Mrs. Strang's Annual for Girls" (Oxford University Press, 5s.) may be relied on to tide the most voracious reader over many wet days. "The Girl Guide's Book" (Pearson, 6s.) is a surprise. The cover and the frontispiece led us to expect that it would teem with blue-clad figures and their deeds, good and otherwise, but it contains stories and articles on general subjects, and the Guide flavour is of the slightest.

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the Iceland falcon, a noble white bird, backed by a misty grey landscape.

The few pictures in "A Book about Birds" afford another contrast in illustrations, for these are from photographs, and when we add that they are by Miss Turner, it will be realized that they are all bird photographs should be; as an example take "male nightingale hovering over female," a wonderful shot, which will probably only be fully appreciated by those who have tried their hand at bird photography. With regard to the text, the authors have given us a book that is admirable for its purpose, namely to interest boys and girls in birds, but one that can, and will, be read with equal interest by their elders, from the introduction on structure and habits, through development, flight, courtship, migration, and enemies, to hints on identification, &c. Perhaps one of the most interesting and charming chapters is that on courtship and song, wherein there is a description of birds singing at dawn—

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which made the reviewer think of a spring dawn on the Kirkstone Pass, when the bird choir was singing with all its might. The valleys were yet wrapped in shadows, while the sun crept up over the purple hills, and distant lakes shone like molten silver, but in the roadside trees and bushes birds were up and awake. From those weather-beaten trees, now sparsely decked with fragile spring greenery, scores of blackbirds and thrushes lifted their voices to heaven, while on Wansfell curlews gave their weirdly beautiful mating cry, and larks went soaring upwards into the morning sky, the dream and glory of their song floating down to earth.

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Write for List of Xmas Books.

Student Christian Movement,
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used during the latter half of the eighteenth century, and a very uncomfortable form of exercise it must have been. The Dictionary represents an immense amount of research: it is not merely a picture-book of furniture, but deals with the subject exhaustively from the technical and historical point of view.

Mr. Bryant's book on Chelsea Porcelain Toys is confined to the products of the Chelsea factory between the years 1745 and 1784 (after which the buildings were demolished and the moulds, oven, and plant transferred to Derby, the Chelsea factory having been sold to William Duesbury of Derby). It is a very beautiful book, with innumerable coloured plates of scent-bottles, bonbonnières, étuis, seals, and statuettes. These objects represent an amusing eighteenth-century fashion: many of them are very charming, but it does not do to criticize them from a lofty artistic standpoint. They are frankly representational in intention—"scent-bottle in the form of a lady asleep seated by a rose-tree, a mastiff keeping watch beside her," "scent-bottle in the form of a net full of codfish." The design is in no way formalized, the colours naturalistic, and used with little attempt at selection, and consequently, being dependent for beauty on pure chance, they seldom attain it, and though they may sometimes be " quaint " and amusing, they are very often ugly and ungainly. Another interesting and well-informed book on china, the result of direct enthusiasm, is Mr. Hurlbutt's "Old Derby Porcelain," well illustrated also—though not quite so comprehensively—from pieces in his own and other collections. It shows us objects of a considerably higher artistic merit, restraint of design and calculated adaptation of decoration to object, as well as great charm and skill of drawing. It is a pity that more of the plates could not be in colour, a pity also that the author, anxious to get away from the ordinary conventions of printing and book-production, should have had his book printed in violet and madder-brown ink, with a badly proportioned page and a very unpleasing violet cover.

The making of glass is an industry which, affected comparatively little by foreign influences, was brought to a very high standard of perfection in England, and retained always a distinct national individuality. This was owing mainly to the difference (and the excellence) of its material and to the fact that the English craftsmen used their material always in strict regard to its utility and were not tempted from their restraint to indulge in flights of mere virtuosity. Mr. Buckley, not only an expert in fine glass, but a discriminating lover of it, gives magnificent photographs of many fine specimens and several chapters on its history, both technical and artistic, its different makers, and the different centres of the industry.

Mr. C. R. W. Nevinson, examples of whose work are now published in Messrs. Benn's "Contemporary British Artists" series, is a painter who depends too much on the interest, the sensationalism even, of his subjects. He loves scenes of war, the romantic skyscrapers of New York, startling combinations of ships' masts, roofs, clouds. He has a considerable measure of skill and sense of design, but there is a hardness, a rather insensitive theatricality, about his work which is far from pleasing. The etchings of Mr. Frank Benson are strongly influenced by Japanese prints: he portrays flying birds against a background of suggested water and a few reeds, but he fails to convey any sort of emotion. Sir D. Y. Cameron is more complicated; his search is always for the picturesque, whether it be in mountain-ranges, gargoyles, interiors of churches, or architectural "bits," and he never fails to produce an atmosphere of luxurious romanticism.

Herr Emil Fuchs's autobiography makes interesting reading for the student of art and artists. He has been highly successful in his profession: he has hobnobbed with Royalty and all kinds of distinguished personages: he drew Queen Victoria on her deathbed, and designed postage-stamps for King Edward: he has sumptuous studios in London and New York (illustrated in his book), full of expensive bric-à-brac. The book contains also—besides facsimile letters from Queen Alexandra—many reproductions of Herr Fuchs's portraits, drawings, etchings, and sculpture, which are dull and lacking in feeling or distinction. The book is another proof that an artist may be successful or good, but rarely both.

JOURNALIST AND ESSAYIST

A Casual Commentary. By ROSE MACAULAY. (Methuen. 6s.)

Essays on Life. By A. CLUTTON-BROCK. (Methuen. 6s.)

Experiments. By NORMAN DOUGLAS. (Chapman & Hall. 12s. 6d.)

IN reviewing these three books together it is necessary to discriminate between articles and essays; and one of the measures by which we may judge them is the measure of pace. The article-writer is a journalist; and he must for ever accelerate, to keep up with the rush of the world in which he lives. But the essay-writer lives in his own world, and walks in time with it; and his essays are marked at a *tempo* which is not that of the newspapers. Therefore the adequacy of his self-expression depends not only upon the accord between this *tempo* and the rhythm of his thought, but also on his power to compel the reader, on his side, to recognize and respect this *tempo*. Thus, to read Mr. Douglas's book hastily would be as offensive as scampering through the Forty-eight Fugues and Preludes; while to loiter through Miss Macaulay's would irritate as acutely as dragging rag-time. Not that the essayist's pace is necessarily slow; for he sometimes whirls the reader at a break-neck speed. No—the difference lies in the fact that the essayist always demands sympathy and co-operation from his reader, and asks him to match his step to what he reads; whereas the perfect journalist must march in time with the crowd, and adapt himself to its uniform demands. For a crowd will march in time, and fox-trot in time; but that it cannot ramble is obvious to anyone who has ever blundered into a Cook's conducted tour.

Now Miss Macaulay is frankly a journalist, and her articles keep time with the tramp of daily city-goers. She can be read in the Tube, and even enjoyed there; for she says many amusing things, and a few true things, in her brisk, Aristotelian sentences. And she has retained her fastidious precision of thought, and her sense of the meaning of words. She has no patience, for instance, with generalities about women, protesting that—"Mr. George is not fair in effect, though accurate, when he complains that, in the early part of last century, poor women could be hanged, publicly whipped, or stood in the pillory. They could; but so could poor men." Again, she scorns the prevalent use of the word "suggestive" as synonymous with "indecent"—a use apparently based on the belief that "it is notoriously a bad thing to suggest thoughts or ideas." And over and over again she neatly expresses our own unspoken, perhaps undetected, wonderment at the silliness of men and women.

Her journalism belongs essentially (though not actually) to the daily Press. But Mr. Clutton-Brock wrote for the more leisured readers of weeklies and monthlies; he could demand something of their time and attention, and therefore he contrived to write articles that were also essays. His easy stride—despite the fact that, we believe, he often wrote an article in the train between Guildford and Waterloo—cannot be measured by the rate of trains, motors, and 'buses; for behind their din he heard "the still, sad music of humanity"; and he dominated others by the individuality and sincerity with which he interpreted that music. These posthumous essays were not written for publication, and are unequal in value; but there are many good things in them. It is interesting to hear a religious man bear witness thus: "If a work of art is good to me, its goodness is not moral, but simply æsthetic, something perceived immediately and valued for its own sake, without relation to any kind of conduct." While it is wholesome to be reminded that "advanced or rebellious morality is still morality; and if you value Ibsen as a rebellious moralist, you are one in æsthetic error with those who value Longfellow for his orthodox morality."

But while Miss Macaulay jogs on with the casual world, and Mr. Clutton-Brock marches beside many thinking people, there are only a few who will dance to Mr. Norman Douglas's piping. For he is an essayist; and whether you take or leave his essays is your affair alone. He writes with that elaborate simplicity, that slow lucidity which is a relic of the 'nineties; and the reader must go slowly too, licking his lips over *macabre* tit-bits, and dwelling upon the subtle juxtaposition of words.

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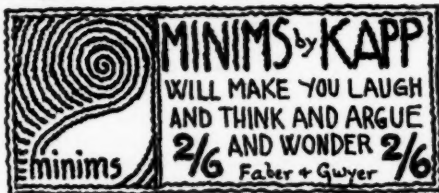
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In SECRETS OF A SHOWMAN, Charles B. Cochran takes the reader behind the scenes at the theatre and the prize ring. With a preface by James Agate, and William Nicholson's arresting cover, the cost is 25/-.

Belles Lettres include Sir Edmund Gosse's SILHOUETTES, (8/6), his latest essays selected by himself, and the first popular edition of George Moore's HELOISE AND ABELARD (half-a-guinea).

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BOOKS FOR SMALL CHILDREN

Is the judgment of adults (other than parents, who are shameless), a good book for a small child is one which they can read aloud without exposing themselves to acute embarrassment. In the judgment of a small child, almost any book is a good book, because, if it does not do for one thing, it will do for another.

There is, for instance, the book by the well-known writer, the safe book. Children are so docile and so good-mannered that they will, under the double influence of the collecting habit and grown-up suggestion, speak of "the new Milne" and "the new Rose Fyleman," with precisely the same reverence for a decent institution as their elders will speak of "the new Galworthy" or "the new Hugh Walpole." This year, quite the most sumptuous book they can have is "the new Milne"—"A Gallery of Children" (Stanley Paul, 12s. 6d.), illustrated with pretty-pretty coloured plates by Miss Willebeek le Mair. "The new Rose Fyleman" (Methuen, 3s. 6d.) is a volume of fanciful verse, called "Fairies and Friends." Some children may prefer the crisp and detached manner of Mr. E. V. Lucas in "Playtime and Company" (Methuen, 7s. 6d.), illustrated by Mr. Ernest Shepard, whose acquaintance they will have made already in the pages of "Punch."

The big annuals—"Blackie's" and "Mrs. Strang's," with separate volumes for Children (5s. and 6s. 6d.), and for Baby (3s. 6d. and 4s. 6d.), published by the Oxford University Press; "Number Three Joy Street" (Oxford: Blackwell, 6s.), and Lady Cynthia Asquith's collection, "The Flying Carpet" (Partridge, 6s.)—have one attraction in common, they offer a magnificent quantity and variety of reading. "Blackie's" and "Mrs. Strang's" are clearly the work of people whose profession it is to write for children. There is something more than a little perfunctory—though probably it is not disconcerting to their proper readers—in these bright optimistic accounts of angelic mothers, wise fathers, and well-nourished children, with a few conventional fairies and talking animals to round them off. "The Flying Carpet" has a long list of distinguished contributors, including Sir J. Barrie, Mr. Chesterton, and Mr. de la Mare, and there is a short poem by Mr. Hardy. One or two of the stories, although entertaining enough in themselves, seem to be written rather about, than for, children, a serious mistake. Others, notably those by Lady Cynthia Asquith, Mr. Desmond MacCarthy, and Mr. Denis Mackail, keep the right attitude, and lose nothing by dispensing with the conventional hearty manner. Some of the same distinguished writers, and others, contribute to "Number Three Joy Street." On the whole, this seems to be the most satisfactory of the annuals. The white cloth cover, diapered with small raspberry-coloured dragons, is particularly charming, the general production is good, the stories are above the average, and entirely in sympathy with a child's outlook. Mr. Belloc's contribution is well up to the standard of his immortal "Godolphin Horn."

Of the books which contain only one long story, "Poor Cecco," by Margery Bianco Williams (Chatto & Windus, 7s. 6d.), is one of the best. Internal evidence shows it to be American, but it is not unintelligibly so. The incidents are new and well-conceived, and, best of all, it gives the impression of having been written with gusto by a writer who has imagination and humour. The illustrations by Arthur Rackham are hardly on a level with the text.

"The Quoks," by Luxor Price (Chambers, 6s.), is another American inspiration, agreeably fantastic and original. The pictures, done by the author, are of the right ingenious and complicated kind, and should be a great solace to those children whose fathers cannot or will not draw them maps, full of circumstantial detail, of imaginary islands.

It is unnecessary to recommend a "de la Mare"; one need only say that "Miss Jemima," by Walter de la Mare, is a new volume in "The Jolly Books" (Oxford: Blackwell, 1s. 6d.), and will bring pleasure both to children and to their elders.

"The Cat, the Dog, and the Dormouse," by Alice Hall (Blackie, 6s.), is a highly successful story of anthropomorphic animals.

"The Night Adventures of Alexis," by Eleanor Graham (Faber & Gwyer, 7s. 6d.), describes the dream adventures of a small boy with his three apes which come to life in the night-time.

"The Silver Trumpet," by Owen Barfield (Faber & Gwyer, 7s. 6d.), is chiefly remarkable for delightful coloured prints by Mr. Gilbert James.

"Mr. Papingay's Ship," by Marion St. John Webb (Stanley Paul, 5s.), has almost as much solid reading in it as an annual. "The Little Girl who Curtsied to the Owl" (Werner Laurie, 3s. 6d.), by Mary and Margaret Blake, is attractively illustrated with silhouettes of animals and birds. "The Silver Fish," by Anne Mort (Sheldon Press, 1s.), is an unpretentious set of short nature stories.

"Blobs at the Seaside," by C. Vernon Stokes (Chambers, 6s.), evidently one of a Blobs series, is a very jolly book for a small boy, with amusing verse narrative, and wide satisfying pictures by the author.

It is difficult to say quite what would be the appeal of "Nursery Verseries," written and illustrated by Emile Jacot (Noel Douglas, 2s. 6d.). The pictures are beyond the comprehension of a child, and the sentiment rather cloying. Perhaps they would not come amiss to an "only" girl of sentimental tendencies.

"Little Sea-Dogs," by Anatole France, a translation of part of the Pierre Nozière series, makes a strange appearance in this galley. It is published at the Bodley Head (7s. 6d.), and illustrated by Marcia Lane Foster.

"A Nativity," arranged for acting by children by Eva M. Gilpin (Constable, 6s.), is a Christmas play drawn from old French Noël's. It has appropriate music, and was given at the Hall School, Weybridge, in 1923. It is in French.

"Star Stories," by Muriel Kinney (Oxford: Blackwell, 2s. 6d.), is an ingenious attempt to get young children interested in the stars by telling the stories appropriate to the constellations and giving maps of the constellations.

Messrs. Dean publish a number of simple, brightly coloured books for young children, among which may be mentioned "Play-day A.B.C.," "Fireside Stories," and "Easy Farm Painting Book."

BOOKS IN BRIEF

Some of the Smaller Manor Houses of Sussex. By VIS COUNTESS WOLSELEY. (Medici Society. 12s. 6d.)

Lady Wolseley is not possessed of a light pen, but she is possessed of method and conscience, and a dogged desire to tunnel her way into the heart of her subject. That subject is one of inexhaustible fascination. Scattered about Sussex are innumerable old houses of the lesser sort, small enough to be lived in and used, humble enough to die in harness as barns and pigsties, if fate so wills it, which is perhaps a better lot than to be preserved artificially, like some of our stately homes, where life is now too costly to be possible. Massetts Place, Wapsbourne, Loughton Place, Halland House, Colin Godman—the names sound sweet in the ear, and recall, perhaps, even to idle tourists, glimpses of the charming old places themselves and envious thoughts, which Lady Wolseley's admirable photographs revive, cast in their direction. But Lady Wolseley has not been content with envious thoughts. She has got the owners' permission to make a thorough investigation, has gathered up the local traditions, has searched the parish registers, tramped the fields, examined locks, hinges, and trap-doors, and so built up an authentic history stretching back often for many centuries. The history of those lesser houses is often obscure. They have changed hands often, and the hands have been those of obscure men. Nevertheless, Lady Wolseley increases our sense of the close-knit antiquity of Sussex. The same names turn up again and again—now in a Tudor manuscript, now over a modern shop door. The reddest Socialist could scarcely lift a hand against a Dalyngrigge, a Lewknor, or a Keynes.

Chopin, the Child and the Lad. By ZOFIA UMINSKA and H. E. KENNEDY. (Methuen. 5s.)

This is not really a study of Chopin, but of his environment. The material is drawn largely from a kind of family newspaper edited by him while staying with a friend in a Polish manor house. The account is profusely embellished with descriptions of peasant customs and snatches of traditional song and dance. The whole picture is vivid and helpful. The derivation of Chopin's music becomes clear, and the contrast between the gay, rough life of farm and village, in which the music was born, and the exquisite languors of scented drawing-rooms, in which it has so often been played, is most suggestive.

